

INFORMATION REPORT

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SUBJECT Attitude of Trade Unions on
Decartelization

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1. Representatives of the metal workers' and miners' unions have protested against the policies and actions of the Federal Government on decartelization of the coal - iron - steel industries in Germany. They state that at a recent meeting between representatives of the Economics Ministry, the Federation of German Trade Unions (FDGB) and the industrial unions of the iron and mining industries, the trade union leaders had rejected the government proposal for a German decartelization regulation, but that the Federal Chancellery, nevertheless, reported the proposals as having unanimous endorsement, including that of labor, to the High Commission.
2. The trade unions admit that in a few isolated instances, such as certain mining properties in Dortmund, Oberhausen, and Duisburg, where the pits are physically located amidst foundries, a separation would be contrary to the best interests of the German Economy. These, however, are specifically agreed upon exceptions which must not be generalized. Trade union leaders are of the opinion that the government proposals for a conditional decartelization are designed to becloud the issue, prejudice the decision, and forestall an orderly reorganization of the coal industry.
3. At a recent meeting of representatives of the three unions concerned with the Economics Minister, the former stated their opposition to the cartels clearly. At the same time, however, they are opposed to a blanket adoption of Allied decartelization legislation. In their opinion, the Allied decartelization efforts have created a situation which requires a very basic reorganization of the sociological and labor questions of the industries concerned, and any German law supplanting Allied legislation should also include some aspects of co-determination. They demand, for instance, equality of representation between management and labor on the boards of directors, and the separation of the commercial, technical and sociological functions of management. According to the trade union leaders the Economics Minister maintained that those demands could not be met under existing German law.

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[redacted] management is willing to grant labor a minority representation at the ratio of 5:6 but no more, and that the Government is determined not to grant labor's demands for co-determination even at the risk of economic unrest.

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